

Message Text

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CY, TU

SUBJ: SIMERINI - NEW NICOSIA DAILY

1. NEW NICOSIA GREEK-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER SIMERINI (TODAY) APPEARED FEBRUARY 3. FOLLOWING USUAL CYPRIOT PRACTICE IT WILL PUBLISH DAILY EXCEPT MONDAY. PAPER IS EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY GROUP OF SEVEN CYPRIOTS WITH CONSIDERABLE JOURNALISTIC EXPERIENCE LED BY ANTONIS PHARMAKIDES, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER OF (PRO-CLERIDES) WEEKLY ALITHIA AND DEAN OF CYPRIOT JOURNALISM.

2. PHARMAKIDES BEGAN PLANNING NEW DAILY IN NOVEMBER 1975. DELAY IN PUBLISHING CAUSED BY DIFFICULTY IN ENLISTING NECESSARY NUMBER OF JOURNALISTS WILLING TO INVEST ONE THOUSAND POUNDS (DOLLARS 2500) EACH IN VENTURE. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS FINAL ARRANGEMENTS CALLED FOR INVESTMENT OF 500 POUNDS AND OBLIGATION TO WORK FOR PAPER WITHOUT SALARY FOR FIRST THREE MONTHS.

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3. IN DOG-EAT-DOG WORLD OF CYPRIOT JOURNALISM WHERE MOST NEWSPAPERS DEPEND ON SUPPORT FROM VARIOUS FACTIONS, THERE REMAINS QUESTION HOW LONG SIMERINI CAN EXIST WITHOUT REQUIRING SUBSIDY WITH CONSEQUENT LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE. PAPER IS UNDERSTOOD TO BE DOING UNEXPECTEDLY WELL WITH ADVERTISEMENTS AND TO HAVE LINED UP SEVERAL LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS. CIRCULATION IS VARIOUSLY ESTIMATED BETWEEN SIX AND EIGHT THOUSAND WHICH IF TRUE IS ABOVE BREAK-EVEN POINT HERE FINANCIALLY.

4. IN FIRST TWO WEEKS OF PUBLISHING, SIMERINI GIVES IMPRESSION OF INDEPENDENT, PRO-WESTERN ORIENTATION ON INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS. BY LOCAL STANDARDS, PAPER HAS BEEN RESTRAINED IN CRITICISMS OF U.S. AND POINTED IN ATTENTION GIVEN TO SOVIET INACTION ON CYPRUS QUESTIONS. PAPER HAS MADE REPEATED CALLS FOR "REALISM" ON CYPRUS PROBLEM AND SUPPORTED CLERIDES' EFFORTS TO REACH NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. IT HAS SPECIFICALLY REJECTED ARGUMENTS THAT TIME IS ON GREEK CYPRIOTS' SIDE AS WELL AS CALLS FOR LONG STRUGGLE AGAINST TURKS. ALTHOUGH AVOIDING DIRECT CRITICISM OF MAKARIOS, EDITORIALS HAVE BEEN CRITICAL OF GOC POLICY, ESPECIALLY GREEK CYPRIOT APPROACH TO INTERCOMMUNAL NEGOTIATIONS IN PAST. NEWS COVERAGE HAS BEEN (FOR CYPRUS) WELL BALANCED; SERIES OF INTERVIEWS ON PROSPECTS FOR CYPRUS SOLUTION HAS ATTRACTED CONSIDERABLE FAVORABLE COMMENT.

5. COMMENT: SIMERINI'S SERIOUS AND APPARENTLY HONEST PROFESSIONALISM IS REFRESHING CHANGE FROM FANTASIES WHICH USUALLY PREOCCUPY CYPRIOT PRESS. INITIAL PUBLIC REACTIONS HERE HAVE BEEN FAVORABLE TO PAPER'S APPROACH, WHICH IS DIRECTED AT EDUCATED MIDDLE AND UPPER CLASSES. IT APPEARS TO BE DRAWING READERS AWAY FROM (PRO-MAKARIOS) PHILELEFTHEROS AND TO A LESSER DEGREE FROM (PRO-CLERIDES) AGHON AND (PRO- SAMPSON) MAKHI. DESPITE GOOD START WITH SOLID FINANCIAL PLANNING, PAPER STILL HAS LONG WAY TO GO TO INSURE ITS FUTURE. ALWAYS CYNICAL, CYPRIOT NEWSPAPER READERS HAVE SPECULATED ON HIDDEN BACKING FOR PAPER. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AMERICAN EMBASSY IS FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE BACKER. ISRAELI EMBASSY IS ALSO SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT WITH PAPER BECAUSE ALECOS CONSTANTINIDES (AGENCE FRANCE CORRESPONDENT IN NICOSIA), WHOSE PRO-ISRAELI ATTITUDES ARE WELL KNOWN HERE, IS AMONG ORGANIZING JOURNALISTS. END COMMENT.
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